

Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior listings of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims

1-6. (Cancelled)

7. (Currently amended) A method of controlling the use of a weapon having a receiver and a processor secured thereto, the weapon being actuatable between an inactive state which prevents firing and an active state which permits firing, said method including the steps of:

transmitting from an identification unit that is separate from the weapon, an activation code and a continuous signal after the activation code is transmitted to change said weapon from said inactive state to said active state and thereafter maintain said weapon in said active state;

receiving with the receiver the activation code and then the continuous signal transmitted by the identification unit;

with the processor, placing the weapon in ~~an~~the active state from the inactive state when the receiver receives the activation code;

after said step of placing the weapon in the active state, monitoring the signal strength of the continuous signal received by the receiver;

maintaining the weapon in the active state exclusively dependent upon the monitored strength of the continuous signal being at or above a minimum signal strength, and regardless of a frequency of the continuous signal or either the presence or absence of the activation code, so as to avoid a deactivation of the readiness of the weapon to fire by an interfering transmitter solely by monitoring the strength of the continuous signal, and

deactivating the weapon with the processor if the strength of the monitored continuous signal falls below the minimum strength.

8. (Previously presented) The method of controlling the use of a weapon of Claim 7, wherein:

prior to said steps of transmitting the activation code and the continuous signal from the identification unit, entering into the identification unit an identification code;

with the identification unit, comparing the entered identification code to an identification code in the identification unit; and

only if the entered identification code is the same as the identification code in the identification unit, performing said steps of transmitting the activation code and the continuous signal from the identification unit.

9. (Previously presented) The method of controlling the use of a weapon of Claim 8, wherein, in said step of entering the identification code into the identification unit, the identification unit reads biometric data from an individual.

10. (Previously presented) The method of controlling the use of a weapon of Claim 8, wherein, said step of entering the identification code into the identification unit is performed by reading fingerprint data for an individual into the identification unit through a fingerprint reader attached to the identification unit.

11. (Previously presented) The method of controlling the use of a weapon of Claim 8, wherein, said step of entering the identification code into the identification unit is performed by reading fingerprint data for an individual into the identification unit through a CCD fingerprint reader attached to the identification unit.

12. (Previously presented) The method of controlling the use of a weapon of Claim 8, wherein:

a wristband is attached to the identification unit for holding the identification unit to an individual and the identification unit includes a switch for indicating if the wristband is closed; and

the identification unit includes an identification unit processor for performing said step of comparing the entered identification code to the identification code in the identification unit and the switch is connected to the identification unit processor for actuating the identification unit processor only when the wristband is closed.

13. (Previously presented) The method of controlling the use of a weapon of Claim 8, wherein the continuous signal comprises a radio signal transmitted by the identification unit and received by the receiver; and

said step of monitoring the strength of the continuous signal is performed by monitoring the strength of the radio signal.

14. (Previously presented) The method of controlling the use of a weapon of Claim 7, wherein the continuous signal comprises a radio signal transmitted by the identification unit and received by the receiver; and

said step of monitoring the strength of the continuous signal is performed by monitoring the strength of the radio signal.

15. (Previously presented) The method of controlling the use of a weapon of Claim 7, wherein the activation code and the continuous signal are selected from a group consisting of infrared signals and ultrasound signals.

16. (Cancelled)

17. (Previously presented) The method of controlling the use of a weapon of Claim 7, wherein the continuous signal comprises an uncoded signal.

18. (Previously presented) The method of controlling the use of a weapon of Claim 7, including, after the weapon is in the active state, transmitting a readiness signal from the weapon to the identification unit and displaying the state of readiness of the weapon on the identification unit.

19. (Cancelled)

20. (Currently amended) A method for controlling the use of a weapon which is actuatable between an initial inactive state which prevents firing and an active state which permits firing, comprising the steps of:

providing an identification mechanism that is separate from the weapon and carried by a user authorized to use said weapon, the identification mechanism including a transmitter having a transmitting antenna;

providing a module on the weapon comprising a receiver having a receiving antenna and a processor, ~~said module being free from a transmitter;~~

detecting an authorized user with the identification mechanism to authorize operation of the weapon;

transmitting from the identification mechanism using the transmitter and the transmitting antenna, upon detecting an authorized user, a coded activation signal including an activation code followed by an uncoded signal wherein the coded activation signal signals the ~~indicated~~ detection of an authorized user;

using the receiver having the receiving antenna to detect the coded activation signal and the uncoded signal;

placing the weapon in ~~an~~the active state upon receipt of the activation code with the coded activation signal to permit firing of the weapon;

monitoring a signal strength of the uncoded signal received by the receiver;

maintaining the weapon in the active state exclusively dependent upon the uncoded signal received by the receiver being at or above a minimum strength and regardless of a frequency of the uncoded signal and of whether an interference signal is received, wherein continued detection of the signal strength at or above said minimum strength exclusively maintains said weapon in said active state and prevents return of said weapon to said inactive state; and

deactivating the weapon by the processor by returning the weapon to inactive status to prevent firing of the weapon ~~if~~once the strength of the uncoded signal received by the receiver ~~is~~falls to a level less than the minimum strength.

21. (Cancelled)

22. (Previously presented) The method of controlling the use of a weapon of Claim 20, wherein the uncoded signal comprises an uncoded continuous RF signal and the activation signal comprises an RF signal.

23. (Previously presented) The method of controlling the use of a weapon Claim 20, the module including a wake-up circuit for the steps of:

activating the processor when the receiver receives the activation signal, and

deactivating the processor when the received signal has a signal strength less than the minimum signal strength.

24. (Previously presented) The method of controlling the use of a weapon of Claim 20, wherein the identification unit is integrated into a wristband, and the identification unit includes a switch for indicating if the wristband is closed, the identification unit detecting an authorized user and transmitting the activation signal followed by the uncoded

signal to place and maintain the weapon in the active state only when the wristband is closed.

25. (Previously presented) The method of controlling the use of a weapon of Claim 20, wherein both the activation signal and the uncoded signal consist of one of infrared energy and ultrasound energy.

26. (Previously presented) The method of controlling the use of a weapon of Claim 20, including the step of displaying the name or the picture of the authorized user on the identification mechanism.

27-28. (Cancelled)

29. (Previously presented) A method of controlling the use of a weapon having a module with a receiver and a processor attached thereto, the method comprising:

transmitting from an identification unit that is separate from the weapon and carried by a user authorized to use said weapon, a transmitted signal that comprises an activation code and a continuous signal after the activation code;

receiving at the receiver a received signal which comprises the transmitted signal from the identification unit;

monitoring the received signal received by the receiver in the module and, with the processor of the module, placing the weapon in an activated state to permit firing of the weapon if the received signal includes the activation code;

after placing the weapon in the activated state, monitoring a strength of the received signal in the module;

maintaining the weapon in the activated state exclusively dependent upon the strength of the received signal monitored in the module being at or above a minimum signal strength, and regardless of a frequency of the received signal or the presence or absence of the activation code in the received signal;

avoiding a deactivation of the weapon from the activated state by a potential interfering signal from an interfering transmitter provided that the strength of the received signal is at or above the minimum signal strength; and

deactivating the weapon with the processor if the strength of the received signal falls below the minimum signal strength.

30. (Previously presented) The method of controlling the use of a weapon of Claim 29, wherein avoiding deactivation of the weapon from the activated state occurs such that the strength of the received signal may include field strength of the potential interfering signal from the interfering transmitter without disturbing a readiness of the weapon to fire in the activated state.

31. (Previously presented) The method of controlling the use of a weapon of Claim 29, further comprising:

displaying at the identification unit the name or the picture of an authorized user of the weapon.

32. (Previously presented) The method of controlling the use of a weapon of Claim 29, wherein the continuous signal comprises an uncoded continuous RF signal and the activation code comprises an RF signal.

33. (Previously presented) The method of controlling the use of a weapon of Claim 29, wherein both the activation code and the continuous signal consist of one of infrared energy and ultrasound energy.